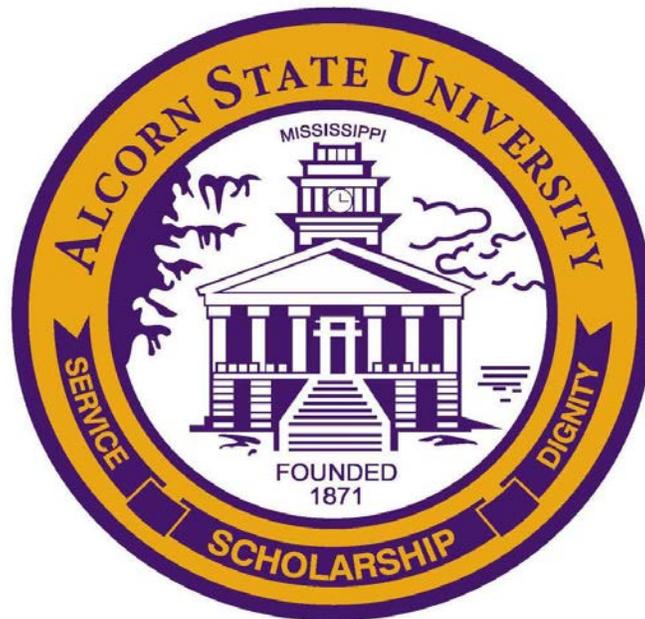# Division of Graduate Studies

CAPSTONE PROJECT MANUAL

Revised Spring 2019

FOREWORD

Alcorn State University Office of Graduate Studies requires that all students comply with the specifications given in this document in the publication of a capstone project.

Graduate students, under faculty guidance, are expected to produce scholarly work regardless of the type of scholarly research project.

The capstone project (master or specialist) should document the student's research study and maintain a degree of intensity.

The purpose of this manual is to assist the graduate student and the graduate capstone advisory committee in each department with the instructions contained herein. This is the official approved manual by the Graduate Division.

Formatting questions not addressed in these guidelines should be directed to the Graduate School staff in the Walter Washington Administration Building, Suite 519 or by phone at 601.877.6122 or via email: graduatestudies@alcorn.edu or in person.

The Graduate Studies
Capstone Advisory Committee

Director of Graduate
Studies & Assistant Vice President of
Academic Programming Support

(Revised Spring 2019)

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION TO CAPSTONE

Catalogue Description:

Alcorn State University holds learners accountable for the integrity of their work submitted in pursuing a master's degree in which a capstone project is required to conclude their capstone curriculum. The completion of a major capstone paper, written in collaboration with the student's assigned project supervisor, serves as a transition from the role of student to that of professional. Through the Capstone Project students engage in a student-centered, content-related learning experience that serves as a summary and synthesis of courses in a student's academic career. Students select an area of interest related to their academic studies and engage in an assignment leading to a research project, creative project, or applied project reflective of comprehensive knowledge gained in graduate studies and demonstrate their knowledge of the outcomes of the master's program based on their area of concentration.

The Capstone Project is designed to demonstrate students' accumulated training in a project of their choice, subject to the instructor's approval and under the additional supervision of a faculty mentor. Although the most common way of completing a capstone project is to select from alternate projects can be explored in consultation with the supervising mentor and Capstone Project Committee. The completed project should bring together the student's theme, region, disciplinary studies, and professional experience. The Capstone Project necessitates multiple drafts of the student's research that is subjected to heightened peer review and regular feedback from their mentor. The structure of the paper fuses classroom learning, academic research, and school or community practice into a finished work that they will present in a formal venue. This project serves as an opportunity for students to create their own unique contribution to their field of study, which they can bring with them and implement, if they wish, into their professional settings.

Capstone Project Objectives:

The purpose of the Capstone Project is to:

1) Provide the student who is nearing completion of their graduate program of study an opportunity to conduct research and/or a scholarly literature review on a contemporary topic in their academic or related area that is of particular interest to them.
2) Provide the student with a learning experience that is individualized and supervised by an academic and research experienced faculty member who has specific expertise and/or interest in the area of study selected for research by the Capstone Project student and the project supervisor.
3) Provide the student with an integrated learning experience in which coursework taken throughout their program of study (e.g. research and writing coursework, theories and techniques of coursework, etc.) is synthesized and culminates in the completion of a final project that demonstrates graduate level research, writing, and scholarship skills.
4) Provide the student with a public venue for presenting their final Capstone Project. It is hoped the student will gain a sense of confidence and comfort with presenting their professional work in public before a target audience.

     5) Provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate their professionalism in terms of:

        a. their ability to work collaboratively with their project supervisor
        b. their ability to complete their Capstone Project in a timely manner
        c. their ability to complete graduate level research and present their finding(s) in a professional manner
        d. their ability to utilize technology in the research and presentation of their Capstone Project
        e. their ability to develop, write, and present research finding following current APA guidelines.

Required resources:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Capstone Manual. (2018). Division of Graduate Studies. Alcorn State University

SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF CAPSTONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

A capstone advisory committee (CAC) is selected prior to commencing any research by the student. Development of the thesis or non-thesis effort should proceed in an orderly fashion. The student who anticipates graduating in a timely manner needs to adhere to the following schedule of activities:

Early topic and project selection

Selection of Committee Chair
The committee chair must be a member of the graduate faculty in your discipline. A time line should be developed with the guidance of the committee chair.

The capstone committee members should be selected under the guidance of the committee chair (a minimum of two members in addition to the chair). A third member can be identified if an expert in the professional field is needed.

Selection of Capstone Project Committee Members
Capstone members should hold a minimum of a master's degree. Two of the three CAC members should be in your discipline, including the chair.

A third member may be chosen from any qualified Alcorn State University faculty, or a qualified community member holding a master's degree or higher* If a student selects a member outside of the university, a letter of explanation regarding why a capstone member outside of the university was chosen needs to be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies, along with the proposed member's curriculum vita. A letter of approval for the proposed committee member should be obtained from the Director of Graduate Studies.

The student must be enrolled in thesis or an independent course in order to hold conferences with the CAC.

Appointment of Capstone Advisory Committee Form
An "Appointment of Capstone Advisory Committee" form with committee member signatures should be completed and turned in to your committee chair. (See Appendix Q)

Invitation to prospective committee members should be issued in writing by the student.

The CAC committee selection will be submitted to the Department Chair of the student's discipline which will then be forwarded to Graduate Studies.

The CAC chairperson is responsible for student guidance regarding scheduling of activities for thesis and non-thesis development. Although the student is ultimately responsible for his or her own work, all CAC members are accountable for the quality of the capstone.

CAPSTONE REQUIREMENTS

When to Enroll
Students must enroll in the capstone course in their respective department after completing all other curriculum coursework. This should be the last course(s) taken. It is advised at least two research courses are part of the Capstone Curriculum to provide students with a greater opportunity to learn the capstone process and adequately develop the written paper.

Thesis vs. Capstone Project

The Capstone Project is primarily a thorough literature review addressing the problem or issue of the student's choosing, followed by a discussion describing the unique contribution that the student intends to make by addressing the problem or issue in his/her professional endeavors. Often the Capstone Project includes specific curriculum (included as appendices) or offers materials that can be used in implementing the proposed method of addressing the problem or issue.

NOTE: Any research involving human subjects requires approval by the Alcorn State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Contact your advisor for information.

The candidate's faculty supervisor and an oral examination committee must approve the *Master's Capstone Paper*.

Programs that Require Capstone Projects

Several programs at Alcorn require a capstone project as a culminating experience of the student's program of study.

Social Sciences – Master of Liberal Arts with Concentrations in Criminal Justice, History, and Political Science

English, Languages, and Mass Communication – Master of Liberal Arts with Concentrations in English/Literature, Mass Communication

Fine Arts – Master of Liberal Arts with Concentration in Music

Nursing – Master of Science in Nursing with Concentration in Nurse Educator

Minimum Investigation Length to Complete a Capstone Project

The gold standard for minimum length of time to complete a capstone project is 10-weeks. Waiting until the last minute to study a topic to clear for graduation might derail a student's graduation candidacy to complete his/her degree on time.

TYPES OF CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Students should begin thinking about the Capstone Project early in their course of study. While students only enroll for Capstone Project for one semester, the project ideally should be a work in progress leading up to enrollment in and completion of the Capstone Project. This topic should be discussed with your committee chair to ensure a comprehensive approach is possible in the investigation. The length of the manuscript depends on the magnitude of the investigation and the time given to thoughtfully and thoroughly discuss the topic under study. In this guide, the minimum page requirement for a capstone is 45 pages in content. References and Preliminary pages are not counted in this page requirement. All work of the student should be under the supervision and advisement of the capstone committee chair and project mentor.

Types of Capstone Projects

Depending on your area of interest in your professional field, you may choose from among the following types of capstone projects.

Research Project

Questions and Inquiries: You will select a gap in knowledge in your discipline created by an area that may not have been previously addressed in course content or may have served as inspiration for greater knowledge on the subject matter, idea, or concept. Through systematic inquiry, you will research, collect, organize, and produce an analysis of the information from both primary and secondary sources.

Your research project will conclude with a 45-page (minimum) scholarly report in Standard Academic English and with appropriate APA documentation, which successfully fills your gap in knowledge on the selected topic.

Creative Project

Audience Demonstration and Presentation: If you are a student in visual, performing, or literary arts you have the opportunity to synthesize knowledge by developing a creative product in your respective field of study. It can be studio and project-based work across a wide range of music industry activities. It may take the form of developing a film, a recital, choreographing a dance, acting in a production, exhibiting paintings, writing a collection of poetry or short stories, writing a play, writing a literary analysis, presenting a photographic essay, or any similar type of creative endeavor.

Your capstone will conclude with an explanatory report relating to the production of your project. It should reveal a synthesis of skills and content knowledge. The length of your explanatory report will be determined according to the nature of your project and subject to approval by your mentor, This type of project will require a demonstration using either a PowerPoint presentation or a video presentation. Your applied project will conclude with a 45-page (minimum) scholarly report, appropriately documented in APA format and written in Standard Academic English, that provides answers to the project question

Applied Project

Question/Answer: If you are a student sociology, or political science, etc., you have the option of selecting a problem within the context of your respective field of study and relating it to an organization, community, or institution. Your attempts to answer a real problem will represent your ability to synthesize and apply concepts learned through course content.

Your applied project will conclude with a 45-page (minimum) scholarly report, appropriately documented in APA format and written in Standard Academic English, that provides answers to the project question.

Externally-oriented Projects

This is one of the most common types of capstone. Students engage in a professionally oriented project that is intended to develop a solution for a client. Student design and execute a project or significant program of activities. Clients may be actual or imagined, or the project may be linked to a competition or contemporary corporate issue. Students are provided a context, scenario or problem. Most commonly students work toward a solution in defined stages, gathering information, undertaking analysis, making decisions, managing workflow and developing a professional-style outcome. In many cases, this includes the implementation of the outcome – such as an event or product. Assessment evidence generally utilizes a combination of behaviors, process and products but where students have individual clients there is less emphasis on the products because requirements, impeding factors and products can vary significantly. The most common assessment deliverables are reports and presentations, which may then be delivered to a client. Presentations are generally public to some degree – to clients, a panel of academics, and/or to peers. Your externally-oriented project will conclude with a 45-page (minimum) scholarly report, appropriately documented in APA format and written in Standard Academic English, that provides answers to the project question

Case Studies

There are many types of case studies and the type of focus for investigation. A case study can be explanatory (focus on an explanation for a question or a phenomenon. The results are not up for interpretation), Exploratory (goal is to prove that further investigation is necessary), Multiple-Case Studies or Collective Studies (information used from different studies to formulate the case for a new study), Intrinsic (study wherein the subject itself is the primary interest), Instrumental (uses a case to gain insights into a phenomenon). Case studies can focus on a person, group, location, or organization/company, or event. Your case study project will conclude with a 45-page (minimum) scholarly report, appropriately documented in APA format and written in Standard Academic English, that provides answers to the project question

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation capstones require the investigator to plan details of your Program Evaluation Capstone, allow for scientific merit and review and facilitate your progress through the capstone. A student pursuing this format must obtain approval of your Capstone Research before seeking IRB approval, collecting data, and writing your capstone manuscript. This type of project must contribute to society by improving a practice, document need for change by utilizing evidence-based needs assessment, meet criteria of a good program evaluation which includes an evaluation of process and/or outcomes (formative or summative). All projects should be designed so that processes or outcomes will be evaluated to guide practice and policy. An important component is real world application in

guiding practice. Your program evaluation project will conclude with a 45-page (minimum) scholarly report, appropriately documented in APA format and written in Standard Academic English, that provides answers to the project question

Healthcare

Literature Review – This type of project would involve analyzing an important public health problem through a survey of current literature on the topic. The project would include sections that clearly describe the problem, assess the problem and its magnitude, evaluate its causes and determinants, and discuss prevention and intervention strategies.

Program Plan – The capstone project involves developing a plan to implement a public health program. It would address critical issues such as management, fiscal, ethical, and logistical issues.

Program Evaluation – The capstone project would involve evaluating or monitoring an existing public health program, such as process evaluation, monitoring of outputs and outcomes, impact assessment and/or cost analysis.

Policy Analysis – The capstone project involves analyzing the public health implications of a current or proposed policy. The work could include perspectives on economics and financing, need and demand, politics/ethics/law, or quality/effectiveness.

Research Proposal – The capstone project would simulate a grant proposal or research plan. The project would include a clear statement of the research question, the specific sims of the proposal, review of literature, study design, methods of analysis, implications and significance of the work. The research question would be one that is encountered in professional work, such as the evaluation of a public health intervention.

Research Report – The capstone project could involve the collection, analysis and/or interpretation of data to address a public health problem. The project could include sections on the research question, study design, data collection procedures, data analysis, interpretation and significance of findings. (Quantitative Research Reports or Qualitative Data Research Reports, Systematic Review and Methods Development)

Using a Course Project – Students may use their work from any project=orientated course as a basis for their capstone, but they must build and expand on it for the final capstone project. The previous work performed must be placed in the list of references, and the advisor will need a copy of the student's original paper.

Your healthcare project will conclude with a 45-page (minimum) scholarly report, appropriately documented in APA format and written in Standard Academic English, that provides answers to the project question

Safe Assign

All written assignments will be validated through Safe Assign. Safe Assign is used to prevent plagiarism and to create opportunities to help you identify how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase. Safe Assign compares your submitted assignments against a set of academic papers to identify areas of overlap between the submitted assignment and existing works. After a paper has been processed, a report is generated detailing the percentage of text in the submitted paper that matches existing sources. Any report greater than 25% is considered plagiarism. The report also shows the suspected sourced of each section of the submitted paper that returns a match. The final capstone project will be evaluated using this process before submitting paper to the Office of Graduate Studies for review.

If a student uses the ideas of others in your paper, you must make sure you paraphrase or give credit according to the guidelines of the APA Publication Manual, 6th ed. Serious sanctions can result from violations of any type of Academic Dishonesty including dismissal from graduate school.

Alcorn State University

Division of Graduate Studies

Project Format

Component	
Typing	Use 12 pt Font; Refer to Thesis Manual for formatting of first three chapters
Text Style	APA Format
Elements of the Manuscript	The contents of the capstone project should consist of 45 pages or more. This requirement does not include preliminary pages, references, and the appendices. You should use not less than 15 sources which should be included in the reference list

PRELIMINARY PAGES	
Title Page	Required, not numbered
Signature Page	Required, not numbered; pages following are numbered using lowercase Roman Numerals
Abstract	Required
Table of Contents	Required
List of Tables	If Needed
List of Figures	If Needed

CAPSTONE PROJECT	
Text (sections in the following order)	Required
Chapter 1	Introduction; starts with page 1
Chapter 2	Review of Literature
Chapter 3	Methodology
Supplementary Pages (in the following order)	If Needed
References	Required
Appendix or Appendices	If Needed; pagination follows last References page

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT	
Introduction	The introduction should set the stage for the project by providing a brief overview of the topic or project under investigation. It should include a Statement of the problem near the beginning of the Introduction. The intent is to reveal to the reader the purpose of the project.
Purpose	Statement of the purpose of the project.
Research Questions	Identify questions to be answered in the research
Description of the Problem	This section should elaborate on the statement of the problem presented in the introduction. Thoroughly describe the nature of the problem; including the rationale for believing the problem exists. Describe how the project will address the problem, and clearly state the goals and scope of the project. These goals must align with the literature review and the methodology
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework	Placement of the problem in a theoretical context. Discussion of theory and concept that systematically explains the relationship among the phenomenon related to the problem. Conclude with section that applies the theory and concept to your project.
Limitations of the Study	This section focuses on the impact of the findings from your research. This section also describes the boundaries that you have set for the study.
Significance of Project for Professional Practice	Indicate how project will contribute to the further development of your professional discipline.
Definition of Terms	Provide the theoretical and operational definition of each concept indicated in statement of purpose.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
Literature Review	The body of the capstone project should contain the literature review. The investigator will have to add all relevant research materials that have been read that are relevant to your paper.
Introduction	Provide introductory paragraph that addresses the purpose of the project, databases used to conduct the comprehensive review of the literature, and identifies the main topics to be addressed. It should both summarize and synthesize the relevant literature.
Major Research	Summarize key articles pertinent to the topic. The majority of the literature reviewed should have been published within the last 10 years, and used from peer-reviewed journals. The investigator must use at least 15 references that are fairly current. If there is agreement among many researchers regarding the topic,

	summarize areas of agreement and report in a parsimonious manner. If details about a specific article are in order, provide information regarding subjects, variables, setting, design, approach, definition, instrumentation, statistical findings, clinical significance, and conclusions. Describe any limitations or deficits in the study.
Summary	Summarize each major topic so that the reader will understand how these articles have influenced your project or how you will improve upon them in your project.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Methodology	Identification of objectives of the program, presentation, module, etc. and method of delivery. Description of the project should detail what you did. The reader should be able to replicate your project based on what is included in this section. You should include the following: • IRB approval and status (actual documents should be included as an appendix. Your approval letter should state whether you are exempt, expedited, full review0 • Type of study or research designed used •
Design	Describe the specific type of research design that was used in the study (Qualitative or Quantitative)
Setting	Description of setting for implementation of the project, presentation, module, etc.
Sample Size	Description of sample and sample size should include the parameters of your study population, relevant participant information and demographics, etc.
Instrumentation	Explain the type of instrument used such as survey, to try to answer the question
Procedure	List step-by-step procedure for the implementation and evaluation of the program, presentation, module, etc. Include a description of materials and methods (types of qualitative or quantitative data collected, data collection procedures/protocol, statistical or other methods used to analyze data/outcomes
Evaluation of Effectiveness	Identify ways used to evaluate the effectiveness of your project the program, presentation, module, etc. Identify the name of the instrument, type of instrument, concepts measured by the instrument, how scores are calculated and their meaning, validity, and reliability of the instrument, and how long it will take to complete the instrument (if appropriate). If the instrument is development by student,

	indicate if tool was evaluated by a panel of experts.
Tables and Figures	These must be referred to and described in the text.
Summary of Findings	Analysis and results. Provide a succinct summary of the findings of your project. If a pilot study, report (a) demographic findings (frequency, range, mean), (b) findings by hypotheses (supported or not supported and provide statistical results and level of significance. Tables must be used to present findings.
Conclusions and Lessons Learned/Recommendations	Conclude your paper with a short conclusion where you wrap things up. Briefly recap the purpose of the project. Reinstate findings, impact of the project, limitations and what arguments you draw from them and your next steps l.

REFERENCES	
Minimum Requirement	A minimum of 15 cited resources is required for the capstone project. All citations included in the text of the paper must appear in the references following the prescribed APA Manual format.
	Cite references used in your paper. Add every source that you cite within the text.

APPENDICES	
IRB	If human subjects were used in the capstone, the appropriate IRB approval must be included (approval letter) as well as the associated permissions, Consent Form, surveys. Human subjects research is activity involving living humans in the research to test a hypothesis or answer a scientific question. This can include both secondary data analysis and research involving direct contact with subjects.
Supplementary Material	The appendices contain supporting documentation that the reader might find useful in understanding data, surveys, questions, etc.

FORMATTING THE CAPSTONE PAPER

All capstone projects are reviewed by the Graduate Office to ensure integrity to style requirements and content. It is the student's responsibility to collaborate with his/her committee chair to ensure content and style meet the graduate standards. Following thorough proofreading of the paper, only the committee chair can submit a pdf version of the paper electronically to the graduate office. This process ensures the advisor has read and approved the document for review. Students are allowed three reviews if errors are detected that warrant corrections. If after the third review a paper is not acceptable, the student will have to delay his/her graduation candidacy to the next term. This additional time will give the student and his/her committee chair additional time to eliminate style and content issues.

Students should follow the current APA guidelines in formatting the Capstone Project. Certain exceptions to APA formatting which are specific to the Capstone Project will be communicated if appropriate.

Please note that while the general Capstone Project guidelines are suggested here, the student's faculty supervisor must approve all formatting before the final approval of the Capstone Project.

Capstone Projects style and content requirements:

Title page
- Is not numbered
- NOTE: the date is the date of graduation
- Margins: 2" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom
- Select a title that summarizes the main idea of the study
- Do not exceed 10-12 words in the title
- Title typed in upper and lower case letters, centered between left and right margins
- Avoid abbreviations
- Preferred form of author's name is first name, middle initial, and last name
- See example in Appendix E

Title Page (see Appendix E)
The title page summarizes the content included in the manuscript to give the reader an idea of the main idea of this document. It should be a concise statement which consists of not more than a maximum of 10-12 words. There are some exceptions depending on the research topic that may allow for a longer title. All text on the title page should be centered. The title of the capstone, which is listed at the top of the page, must be the final, complete title of the capstone and should be the exact title used on the approval page. The title page should also include the student's degree title, and the month, date, and year that the degree is to be awarded (e.g., May 10, 2018). This page should not be listed in the table of contents. The title page is technically page "i" of the preliminary pages. Since the title page is not numbered, the next page in sequence is "ii". Refer to Appendix E for a sample of how the title page should appear.

Approval page (Signatures of Committee members): see Appendix F
- Capstone title typed in upper and lower case letters
- Capstone title single-spaced in body of descriptive paragraph
- Title worded same as on title page
- No page number on approval page
- NOTE: the date is the date of Capstone defense
- Margins: 2" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom
- Four (4) copies required
- Original signatures of all Capstone Project Committee members
- Signatures in **black ink only**
- Each member must sign the approval page only once in the space allotted

The student's name included on this page must be the student's legal name and must not include initials. No recognition or designation of terminal degree, professional or military rank, or marital status is to be included. The name of each capstone committee member must be typed under each signature line. It is the duty of the student to secure original signatures of all committee members for each of the <u>four copies </u>of the thesis or research project.

Copyright page (optional)
- Is not numbered
- Margins: 1" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom

Copyright Information
A Capstone is considered a legally classified publication. Therefore, if a student decides to copyright his/her capstone, it is advisable that the student use a formal copyright vendor resource. If the student decides to include in the thesis copies of illustrative tables, charts, graphs, etc. from copyrighted sources, permission must be obtained prior to this inclusion. An original release letter must be submitted to the original copywriter and permission granted.

Dedication page (optional)
- Start numbering, center, bottom of page, small Roman numeral, count the first 2 or 3 pages that do not have page number appearing.
- Margins: 1" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix G

Dedication Page (see Appendix G)
This page is optional. If the student desires to dedicate his or her capstone, the student may do so using this page. The page should not include a heading. The text is to be brief and pagination is in lower case Roman numerals. Please refer to Appendix D for a sample of how the dedication page should appear. This page can be listed in the student's table of contents.

Acknowledgments (optional)
- Margins: 1" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix E

Acknowledgments Page (see Appendix H)
This page is optional and can be used to include brief statements of appreciation or recognition. This page has the heading "ACKNOWLEDGMENTS," and the heading should be in all capital letters. Pagination is in lower-case Roman numerals. This page, if included, can be listed in the table of contents. Please refer to Appendix H for a sample of what this page should look like.

Abstract (the first numbered page, iii)
- Begin on new page
- The label Abstract should appear in upper and lower case letters, centered
- No paragraph indention
- A brief and concise summary of the study: Purpose, results, conclusions.
- **No more than 250 words**.
- Margins: 1" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix I

Abstract (see Appendix I)
Every capstone project is required to include an abstract. This should be no more than 250 words. The student and his or her committee will determine the content that is to be included in the abstract; however, the page is to be titled "Abstract," and the title should appear in upper and lower case letters. The abstract should include a brief summary of your research and findings. The pagination is lower-case Roman numerals. Please refer to Appendix I for a sample of what this page should look like. Do not include your name, degree, or title on this page. This page should be listed in the table of contents.

Table of Contents
- Use the same heading system that is used in text
- Single space within each section; double space between sections.
- Margins: 1" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix J

Table of Contents (see Appendix J)
Every capstone project is required to include a table of contents. The heading for this page is "TABLE OF CONTENTS" and should appear in all capital letters. All headings, sections, chapters, and the first set of subdivisions/subchapters need to be listed within the table of contents (subsequent sets of subdivisions/subchapters need not be listed). Preliminary pages (with the exception of List of Tables, List of Figures, and List of Appendices) are not to be listed on the table of contents (i.e. Approval/Signature Page). Pagination for this section is lower case Roman numerals. Do not include an entry for "Table of Contents" on your table of contents page.

The Table of Contents indicates the major divisions (i.e., chapters or sections) and principal subheadings of the thesis or research project and the beginning page number of each section. **The format is left up to the committee chair's discretion for certain sub-sections.**

Preliminary pages do not have to be listed in the Table of Contents; however, if they are listed, the listings must start with the Abstract (iii) and must include all preliminary pages. (see APPENDIX J).

All major divisions of the narrative text (i.e., chapters or sections) and principal subheadings

(when appropriate) within each chapter or section must be listed in the Table of Contents. The subordination of the subheadings should be indicated by appropriate spacing and indentation.

All supplementary pages (reference section, appendices if any, and <u>Vita</u>) must be listed in the Table of Contents.

The numbering, wording, and pagination of titles and headings must be exactly the same in the Table of Contents as they are on the pages of the thesis or research project. **All page numbers are right-margin justified in the Table of Contents**.

List of Tables (if more than one table is used)
- Tables are numbered Table 1, Table 2, etc.
- Margins: 1" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix K

List of Tables
Tables and figures should be formatted according to the style manual APA 6th edition. Each table must be identified in the text by using an Arabic number (e.g. Table 3). **The table number and title must be typed above the table**. The top of the table should be at the left-hand, binding side of the page. The font should be the same as the rest of the capstone. List of Tables should be located at the beginning of the capstone, following the table of contents and before the text (body) of the paper. Page numbers should be lowercase Roman numerals. If a table is taken from another source, you must cite that source below the table or figure. Determine the data readers will need to understand in the discussion and data analysis.

Table components consist of Table & number, title in italics, the table of information, and the caption. The caption begins with the word Note in italics, followed by descriptive note(s) for the table, then the source of the table (if not created by the author). The caption appears immediately underneath the table proper. Everything is double-spaced.

Tables are numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals throughout the paper in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text, beginning with Table 1.

Table title is typed flush to the left of the margin, 2 lines above the body of the table.

The table is to be inserted in the text as soon after it is mentioned as possible.

Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), for additional information on the structure of tables.

List of Figures (if more than one figure is used)
- Figures are numbered: Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.
- Margins: 1" top: 1" right: 1.5" left: 1" bottom
- See example in Appendix L

List of Figures
Figure numbers and captions must be typed below the figure using Arabic numbers (e.g.

Figure 2).

Figures are to be numbered consecutively throughout the paper, beginning with Figure 1.

Figure title is typed flush to the left of the margin, 2 lines below the body of the figures.

The figure is to be inserted in the text as soon after it is mentioned as possible.

Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), for additional information on the structure of figures.

PARTS OF THE MANUSCRIPT - TEXT

Quoting and Paraphrasing – If quotes are used in the text of a chapter, the following formatting should be used. If the quotation consists of fewer than 40 words, the text should be enclosed inside double quotation marks. If the quotation consists of more than 40 words, use a freestanding block of text and omit the quotation marks. (Refer to the APA Manual, 6th ed)

Citing Sources – Cite references in text with the author and date. Each reference cited in the text must appear in the reference list. The citations used in the text of a chapter should be listed alphabetically in the references section.

Each chapter or section begins on a new page. The title of the chapter or section is typed in capital letters and is centered at the top of the page. They are designated by upper case Roman numerals used consecutively throughout the capstone project.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction – introductory information

Purpose of the Study – discuss the goal; emphasize practical outcomes or products.

Description/Statement of the Problem – statement of the problem should include the basic difficulty, area of concern, and/or perceived need for the study. It includes a description of the background of the problem (these are factors that caused this to be a problem) and the justification for studying the
problem.

Research Question – research problem posed as a question which serves as the focus of the researcher's investigation. The research question should dictate the research type and paradigm (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods).

Significance of the Study – a part in the thesis that tells the importance and purpose of the study under investigation. It tells how the study will be beneficial to society and/or a specific person or improve the human condition.

Limitations of the Study – this subtitle section focuses on the impact of the findings from your research. This section also describes the boundaries that you have set for the study.

Definition of Terms – only include terms that may not be well understood by a layperson outside of your field. Information in this section is formatted in paragraphs just like information in any other sub-heading. Bold all terms, but not their definitions. Treat each definition as if you were quoting from a dictionary.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of Literature page – no subheadings indicated for this chapter because they will vary considerably based on the research. The format of headings and subheadings depends upon the way you have organized your thoughts via the use of heading levels in your paper. Place headings in their appropriate spot on the page and use boldface formatting as indicated. For more information about headings, see the APA Manual.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Methodology page– begin with an introduction; some suggestions include reiterating the statement of the problem and briefly discussing what this chapter will include; suggested sections listed below.

Design – describe the specific type of research design used in the study.

Subject Selection and Description – discuss the sample and population.

Instrumentation – talk about the survey used, if applicable; try to answer the question, "Was it created for this purpose or did you find it somewhere?"

Data Collection Procedures – a 57 question survey was administered.

Data Analysis – respond to such questions, "How was the data analyzed?" Example: A number of statistical analyses were used in this study. The Statistical Program for Social Sciences version 10.0 (SPSS, 2002) was used to analyze the data. Independent T-Test analyses were conducted…

Limitations – discuss methodological limitations or procedural weaknesses.

Capstone Binding and Distribution Specifications:
- **Binding** – Transparent cover page, spiral or spine binding (black), black back cover page
- **Paper** - All required copies for publishing must be printed on 8.5 x 11inch paper, 20 pound – 25% cotton, printed on one side only.
- **Signature Page** - The approval/signature page cannot be copied; it must have original signatures in black ink. Four (4) original signature pages must be submitted to Office of Graduate Studies following approval for signature of the Graduate Studies Administrator.

PARTS OF THE MANUSCRIPT – SUPPLEMENTARY PAGES (in the following order)

References – Make sure that everything you cite in the text is also in the reference list and vice versa; *APA Manual* describes the correct format for each type of reference; be especially careful about how you reference and format online sources; **each entry should be in a hanging indent format**; (See Appendix P)

Appendix/Appendices (if needed) – Must be labeled appropriately i.e. Appendix A…

FORMAT AND STYLE STANDARDS

Formatting the manuscript according to APA specifications enhances clarity and readability. The following instructions will assist the writer in preparing a well-prepared document. All preliminary page titles, chapter or section designations, and all supplementary page titles are centered at the top of the page, and are typed in all capital letters. This format overrules any differences in format or layout followed by the journal model.

Margins – Set margins 1 inch on all sides except the left margin. The left margin should be set at 1.5 inch. Exceptions to this is top margins for the cover, title page, and signature page are 2".

Alignment - Text should align evenly on the left margin but ragged on the right margin. The first line of each entry should align with the left margin. All subsequent lines should be indented 5 spaces or set a hanging indent at 1/2 inch.

Line Spacing - Double space between all text lines of the manuscript. Double-space after every line in the title, headings, quotations, references, and figure captions. Never use single-spacing or one-and-a-half spacing except in tables or figures. No widows- this is when a paragraph carries over only one line to the top of the next page; No orphans-this is when a heading or subheading occurs at the bottom of a page and is not followed by text.

- Single space table of contents
- One space between words
- Indent at beginning of each paragraph

- Direct quotations greater than 4 lines, single space and offset by 4 spaces.

Line length and alignment – The length of each typed line is a maximum of 6 ½ in. Do not justify lines. Use the flush-left style, and leave the right margin uneven, or ragged. Do not divide words at the end of a line, and do not use the hyphenation function to break words at the ends of lines. Let a line run short rather than break a word at the end of a line.

Paragraphs and indentation – Indent the first line of every paragraph. For consistency, the writer can use the tab key to automatically indent the same amount of characters to begin each paragraph. The remaining lines of the manuscript are uniform and should be flushed evenly with the left margin. The only exceptions that do not follow this formatting are abstract, titles and headings, table titles, figure captions, and block quotations.

Pagination - All page numbers using Arabic numerals should be 1 inch from the top right edges of the page and appear sequentially throughout the manuscript. Every page should be assigned a number with the following exceptions, the title page and the Approval page, which are counted, but not numbered.   The Title Page is considered as page 'i' and the Approval page 'ii'. Page numbers centered on these pages using small Roman numerals (i.e., "iii", "iv", etc.): Dedication page, Acknowledgements, Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures.

Beginning with Chapter 1, pages are numbered with Arabic numbers 1" from top of page and 1" from right margin and continuing throughout the manuscript.

Font - The standard font for student papers is **Times New Roman size 12.** Do not use underlining or all capitals unless specified in this manual. Use boldface for headings and captions with discretion. Keep the font the same throughout the paper; mixing various font styles is not acceptable.

- Use *italic* font only for book or journal titles or special emphasis. Use *italics* as specified in APA Manual for headings as specified.

- Tables and figures may have 10 point

Headings

If a heading appears on the bottom of a page, there must be at least two lines of text following.

Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) for the selection of headings to use. Consistently use Level 1 for the title of each major section

.

In-Text and Parenthetical Citations

Quote with author's name in text	Smith (2006) states that, "..." (p. 112).
Quote with author's name in reference	This is quoted as, "…" (Smith, 2006, pp. 112-4).
Paraphrasing with author's name in text	Smith (2006) stated these facts, too.
Paraphrasing author's name in reference	This fact has been stated (Smith, 2006).
No author – give title of work abbreviated to first major word Italics for books, "quotation marks" for articles	This book is true (*Long,* 2005). This article is true ("Long," 2005).
Citing entire website – put URL	This has evidence (www.pubmed.gov).
Quote from website – use paragraph number	According to, "…" (Smith, 2000, para. 4).
More than one author with same last name	P. L. Smith (2003) and J. M. Smith (2005)
Source has more than one author in text	Smith and Lee agree that (2006)
Source has more than one author in reference	This is agreed upon (Smith & Long, 2006).
Citing more than one work	We all agree (Smith, 2006; Lee, 2004).

Expressing Numbers

The most common questions regarding numbers relate to whether numerals or words should be used. In APA style, numerals are used in the following situations:

- To express numbers 10 and larger.
- To express any number in the document's abstract or any graphical display.
- To express numbers below 10 that are grouped with numbers 10 and larger (5 of 44 participants in the study).
- To express numbers preceding a unit of measurement (8 miles, a 25 mg dose).
- To express numbers in mathematical or statistical functions, decimals, fractions, percentages, and ratios (multiplied by 9, 46% of participants).
- To express units of time, dates, ages, sample or population size, numbers of participants in a study, scores and points on a scale, and sums of money (in 4 years; December 15, 2009, $88 billion).

Note that any time a number begins a sentence, it should be written out, or the sentence should be rephrased so that the number does not begin it. Words should be used in the following situations:

- Use words to express numbers below 10.
- Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) for additional information.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Generally, abbreviations and acronyms should be used if they will be easy for the reader to remember and if using them will eliminate unnecessary repetition. Specifically, do not introduce an abbreviation or acronym if it will be used fewer than four times in the document. The first time you use the item to be abbreviated, place the acronym after it in parentheses:

> **membership in the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC)**

Once you have explained the acronym the first time, use it throughout the rest of the document, without explanation. There are several exceptions to this rule:

- Do not use acronyms in a table or figure.
- Some acronyms can be used without explanation, as they are commonly accepted as words (i.e., REM, HIV/AIDS).
- Do not use "U.S." as an abbreviation of "United States," unless it is being used as an adjective. For example, "U.S. Senate" is correct, while "resident of the U.S." is not.

Statistical Symbols

- Use the term instead of the symbol.
- Percent (%): use the symbol only if preceded by a number.
- Number of subjects can be expressed as $N = 30$.

Use of Copyrighted Material

The student must document and acknowledge any part of the thesis obtained from other sources. Limited use of copyrighted material may not require any permission. The student must obtain necessary permission to quote or reproduce copyrighted materials.

Permission to Reprint

- Obtain permission to reprint from the publisher if you have reprinted more than five hundred words or for tables (or other figures) to clearly state your sources.
- Place the source for a table or other figure directly beneath it.
- Obtain permission in writing and keep it for proof.
- Three acceptable places for acknowledging permission to reprint:
  1. On the copyright page (if you are copyrighting your thesis)
  2. On the first page of the reprinted material
  3. On a special list of acknowledgements (use this method if there is more than one reprint in excess of five hundred words).
- Use phrase such as "reprinted by permission of author" should be used (with an

asterisk if it appears in the form of a footnote on the first page of the reprinted material).

- Refer to *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition) for additional information on the structure of figures.

Grammar

- Active voice used throughout manuscript
- Past tense used to express an action or condition that occurred at a specific time in the past
- Use present perfect tense to express action or condition that did not occur at a specific time or describe action beginning in past and continuing to the present (i.e. Since that time, several investigators have used this method)
- Subject and verb agreement
- Spelling is correct
- Correct use of homophones
- Words used correctly throughout manuscript

HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

Research that involves human subjects must be conducted in compliance with Alcorn's Institutional Research Board policy to protect the rights of human subjects. If the researcher decides to include human subjects in the study, the student must collaborate with his/her thesis advisor before any research activities are conducted. The application and supporting documentation should be submitted to the Office of Sponsored Programs.

ANIMAL SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

The use of animal subjects in research must comply with the University's policy on using animals in research studies. Once the decision is made to include animals and the proper consultation has occurred with the thesis advisor, resources should be consulted on the care of the animals while in the care of the researcher.

CONCLUSION

These guidelines are intended to answer general questions concerning format, style, and submission. For more specific questions or answers, please consult your major professor, committee members, or the Graduate School. Finally, it is the student's responsibility that the capstone meets all requirements and standards.

A Graduate Capstone Committee is assigned to read all capstone projects for content and final formatting approval. The capstone, following the committee's approval, should be submitted to

the Graduate Office electronically in pdf. If the student's capstone requires edits, the capstone will be returned to the committee chair and student for corrections. Once the manuscript is error free and approved by the graduate office, the final approved copy will be returned to the committee chair and student electronically to proceed with acquiring signatures for the final step of binding.

A checklist is provided at the end of this manual (Appendix S) for the student's use to assist in evaluating the capstone project before submission. It is up to the student to use this checklist and make corrections in a timely manner. The following are some common errors students should avoid in their manuscript.

- Incorrect margins
- Grammatical errors
- Headings and page numbers not consistent with Table of Contents
- Incorrect spacing
- Incorrect style and spacing listing references
- Sources noted in manuscript but not listed in references and vice versa
- Numbering pages correctly following the title page

The student is required to submit the original signature pages to Graduate Studies in person or by mail. Once the capstone is approved by the Graduate Studies Administrator, the signature pages will be signed and the student will be notified for pick-up.

Plagiarism
All academic work included in the manuscript must be the student's own unique thoughts and words. If a student's work is not deemed his/her own, the student has committed plagiarism. Disciplinary action will be taken if it is determined plagiarism has occurred. Committee chair and student must ensure they have checked the paper for any questions of plagiarism. There are free plagiarism checkers available on the web students can utilize to check for undocumented information by an author. Committee chairs are advised to use the University's safe assign platform to check for plagiarism and follow the University policy.

Submission of Paper
Only the committee chair is allowed to submit an advisee's paper to Graduate Studies for review and approval. If revisions are requested, they will be returned to the committee chair and student to make the appropriate changes to resubmit. No student submissions are accepted by Graduate Studies. A maximum of three reviews will be conducted on submitted papers. If, after the third submission and review, the paper is not in compliance with all corrections requested, it will be rejected and the student will have to apply for graduation for the next cycle and resubmit his/her paper to begin the review and approval process again.

Final Submission and Approval
Approval of the manuscript is given only after the final document has been reviewed by Graduate Studies for content, grammar, formatting, and other requirements of a quality paper.

Appendices

Appendix A

CAPSTONE GRADING RUBRIC FOR ORAL DEFENSE AND PAPER

STUDENT: **ASU ID:**

DATE: **EVALUATOR:**

DESCRIPTION	SCORE	COMMENTS
Introduction (10 points) ▪ Is the reason for this project adequately described? ▪ Does the introduction provide a complete overview of the targeted group of organization? ▪ Does the introduction provide information on why this project is beneficial to this organization?		
Description of the Problem (20 points) ▪ Is the problem clearly defined? ▪ Are goals clearly described and why they were chosen to guide the project? ▪ Was a complete overview of the environmental context of the capstone provided? ▪ Were organization challenges addressed? ▪ How were goals and objectives chosen to measure the impact of the project? ▪ Is the design adequate for achieving the stated objectives?		
Review of the Literature/Research (20 points) ▪ Was relevant research reviewed? ▪ Did the overview of the research literature provide a critique of the literature that informs this project?		
Description of the Project (20 points) ▪ Does the paper provide a complete overview of the implementation of the project – describing strengths as well as weaknesses of the project? ▪ Are the results presented completely with appropriate measures of success and failure in implementation? ▪ Focus/relevance/contribution to the advancement of the profession		

Conclusions and Lessons Learned from the Project (20 points) ▪ Are the conclusions reasonable, given the overview of the project? ▪ Is the project critiqued with lessons learned whether the project is deemed successful or a failure? ▪ What recommendations are made for next steps as a result of this project?		
Oral Defense (10 points) ▪ Was the project presented clearly and succinctly? ▪ Did the defense clarify the rationale for the capstone project? ▪ Did the defense make recommendations for future application and learning? ▪ Professionalism (delivery, presentation style, attire) ▪ Aids to learning ▪ Organization of presentation ▪ Delivery of Content Knowledge		
TOTAL SCORE		

Appendix B

Division of Graduate Studies
Oral Defense Committee's Report

Section A: To be completed by the student

_____ ASU ID _____
First Name   **Middle**   **Last**

Degree Program_____ Concentration_____

_____

Section B: To be completed by the Committee Chair

Defense Date: _____

To the Graduate School:

The above named student has successfully ☐ defended,   ☐ did not successfully defend

☐ Dissertation   ☐ Thesis   ☐ Research Project   ☐ Capstone Project

Topic:_____

_____

Committee Chair Signature:_____

Committee Member Signature:_____

Committee Member Signature:_____

Committee Member Signature:_____

Section C: For the Graduate School

_____
Director of Graduate Studies & Assistant Vice
President of Academic Programming Support

This reporting form should be submitted to the Graduate School within two days following the student's defense.

Appendix C

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

The presentation day for Capstone Projects is determined by the department and is open to the public (students, graduates, and area professionals) who may wish to attend the defense. Presenters are encouraged to invite family and friends to be there on this important occasion.

Important Reminders:

1. **Handouts**: if students plan to have handouts, they should bring enough copies for all the Capstone students at the site, plus an additional 10 copies for other students and guests.

2. **Turning in the completed paper**: Following the defense, student makes the requested changes specified by the committee. The completed Capstone Project is to be forwarded to the Graduate Office for review by the Capstone Project Committee Chair via email in pdf format – DO NOT turn in a hard copy of your Capstone to the Graduate Office.

3. **Margins for the paper**: All margins (top, bottom, left, right) should follow the prescribed style requirements as listed in the Thesis Manual.

4. **PPT Presentation**. All students should send their PowerPoint to your Capstone Committee Chair prior to the Oral Presentation to be uploaded and ready to go. Please arrive well in advance to be timely.

5. PLAN for no more than a 20-minute presentation, including questions and answers.

Presentation Suggestions from Students:

1. Practice beforehand, so that you speak clearly and slowly within time allowed.
2. Have overheads or Power Points that are LARGE and READABLE (at least 24 font, and in **bold** print; color helps, too).
3. Distribute a handout of at least one page (with your name and findings).
4. LOOK at the audience.
5. Personalize your work, whenever possible.
6. Actively involve the audience in some way, if possible.
7. Dress professionally.

Appendix D

Sample Cover Page for Bound Capstone Project

2 inches Top Margin

APPENDIX D
(Cover Page)

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE EDUCATION ON THE SUCCESS OF

NON-TRADITIONAL ADULT LEARNERS

Cover Title ALL CAPS double spaced

1.5 inches left margin

JANE DOE, B.S.

Name and degree ALL CAPS; 13 single line spaces from title

1 inch right margin; 1 inch bottom margin

School name 19 single spaces from name of student; ALL CAPS; double – spaced from date of graduation

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY

MAY 5, 2018

Appendix E
Sample Title Page

APPENDIX B

(Title Page)

The Impact of Online Education on The Success of Non-Traditional

Adult Learners at Four-Year Colleges

A CAPSTONE PROJECT

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS

JANE DOE, B.S.

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI

MAY 5, 2018

2 inches Top Margin

Title upper and lower case letters, double spaced

1.5 inches left margin

Description 7 single line spaces from last line of title; ALL CAPS, double-spaced

6 single line spaces or 3 double-spaces from thesis description of requirements & degree name; Name, name of school degree resides -ALL CAPS

City and state 18 single spaces or 9 double-spaces from name of school; ALL CAPS; double – spaced from date of graduation

1 inch right margin; 1 inch bottom margin

Appendix F
Sample Approval Page
Appendix C
(Approval Page / Signature Page)
(No page number on the actual title page)

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

February 2, 2019

To the Graduate Studies Administrator:

I am submitting herewith a capstone project written by John Doe entitled "Title of Capstone Project." I have examined the final copy of this capstone for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Liberal Arts.

_____
Marlon Berry, Ph.D.
Capstone Advisory Committee Chair

We have read this capstone and recommend it for acceptance:

_____
Mary Sue White, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
John Alto, Ph.D. Committee Member

Accepted:

_____
Jan Blackmore, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

_____
Graduate Studies Administrator

Appendix G
Sample Dedication Page
(Dedication-Optional)

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my loving sister, Beth Jamison, who always believed in me. She was my muse for choosing this subject for my thesis. It is also dedicated to my mother for her untiring patience and endurance during my long hours of information gathering   and asking for feedback and technical assistance.

The dedication page is optional. If a student elects to include a dedication page, the following should be adhered to.

- No heading appears on the page except the Dedication heading.

- Text is double-spaced.

- The dedication page is numbered in lowercase Roman numerals at the bottom of the page and centered.

Appendix H
Sample Acknowledgements Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge and give praise to my advisor for his expertise in advising me through completion of this thesis. His encouraging words helped me navigate through the APA process in keeping the faith that I could get the job done and done well.

I thank the Graduate Studies staff for their technical assistance to ensure that this document was publication ready.

The acknowledgements page is optional. If used, it allows the student to thank supporters,   mentors, advisors, and other individuals who have supported the student's research and end   product, the thesis.

The following formatting should be adhered to:

- The word acknowledgements should appear in all caps and centered on the page.

- Text is double-spaced.

- The acknowledgements page is numbered in lowercase Roman numerals at the bottom of the page and centered.

Appendix I

Sample Abstract Page

Abstract

The number of non-traditional adult learners participating in e-learning in higher education has rapidly grown in the past decade to meet their career and personal needs. E-learning has become a trend in the education pursuits of this atypical population of students that is inundating the enrollment on most college campuses. Interactive distance teaching and world wide access of educational instruction through Internet services offer non-residential education instruction and services which are more compatible with student lifestyles and needs. Efforts have been organized to use best practices to educate non-traditional learners to ensure satisfaction and academic success. The purpose of the study was conducted to better understand the factors that influence academic success of non-traditional learners participating in distance learning courses Research is limited in guiding practitioners to best practices that increase engagement and retention of these students in flexible learning environments to ensure success. This study also examined key factors that educational professionals should consider in the development, administration and review of distance learning programs that enroll non-traditional adult learners. Qualitative data were collected from graduate students. The findings showed that there were key factors attributed to the academic success of students identified as non-traditional and constructs for future study.

Keywords: distance education, non-traditional student, learning styles, online learning, asynchronous learning, synchronous learning, best practices, adult learners, reflective learning.

Abstract

Begin the Abstract on a new page. The label *Abstract* should appear in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered, at the top of the page. Type the abstract itself as a single paragraph without paragraph indentation (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks).

Beginning with the next line, write a brief and concise summary of the key points of your research. (Do not indent.) Your abstract should be accurate, non-evaluative, coherent, readable and concise. Your   abstract should be a single paragraph double-spaced. Do not exceed the word limit of 250 words.

You may also want to list keywords from your paper in your abstract. To do this, center the text and type *Keywords:* (italicized) and then list your keywords. Listing your keywords will help   researchers find your work in databases.

     i.e.   *Keywords*: aging, attention, emotion

Double space the text and use the same 1 inch margins as in the balance of the paper. Consult pages 25-27 in the APA manual for some tips regarding the qualities of a good abstract. Pay close attention to grammar and spelling; papers with misspellings and typographical errors will   be returned as will abstracts that do not follow the format as illustrated in this document.

Appendix J
Sample Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOTE: This thesis template is meant to guide you in formatting your paper according to APA (6th ed.). Students should work closely with their adviser when creating the manuscript for their thesis.

Appendix K

Sample List of Tables Page

List of Tables

TABLES – start each on a separate page

Table 1

Enrollment in local four-year colleges, 2015

College	New students	Graduating students	Change
Undergraduate			
Cedar University	110	103	+7
Elm College	223	214	+9
Maple Academy	197	120	+77
Pine College	134	121	+13
Oak Institute	202	210	-8
Graduate			
Cedar University	24	20	+4
Elm College	43	53	-10
Maple Academy	3	11	-8
Pine College	9	4	+5
Oak Institute	53	52	+1
Total	**998**	**908**	**90**

Note: Retention Loadlist

If you've constructed more than a couple of tables and plan to place them in the body of your paper, include a list of them in a List of Tables. List the table number, name and page on which the table can be found (example above). If you only have a couple of tables, do not construct a List of Tables, simply include the title of the table and its page number in the Table of Contents in the appropriate place in the pagination order.

Note 1: Not all papers will have a List of Tables (see above).

Note 2: Pay close attention to the purpose and format of your tables and figures.   Tables and   figures are meant to provide a quick graphical reference to the textual discussion within your   paper; as such, they should be concise. For a quick visual reference for formatting a variety of   tables consult the APA manual. Below is information about producing tables as well as an   example of APA table format.

How to Make a Table in APA Style Using Word XP

- Click on *Table*, then go to *Insert* and follow it right to *Table*.
- Figure out how many rows and columns you need. If you aren't right the first time, you can add or delete them later by going to *Insert* and *Delete* under *Table*.
- Click on *Auto Format* in the lower right side of the pop-up.
- Find *Simple 1* (which is green and toward the end of the options) and click on it.
- Where it says "Apply special formats to" toward the bottom of the screen unclick (i.e., get rid of the check mark in the box) all but "heading rows."
- Hit okay.

Appendix L

Sample List of Figures

List of Figures

FIGURES – start each on a separate page; include caption on page with figure

Figures are graphical representations of data (not including <u>tables</u>). If you've included more than 1 or 2 figures in your paper, list them here. List the number, name and page on which the figure can be found (same format as for Tables). If you only have 1 or 2 of figures, include them in the Table of Contents in their appropriate place in the pagination order.
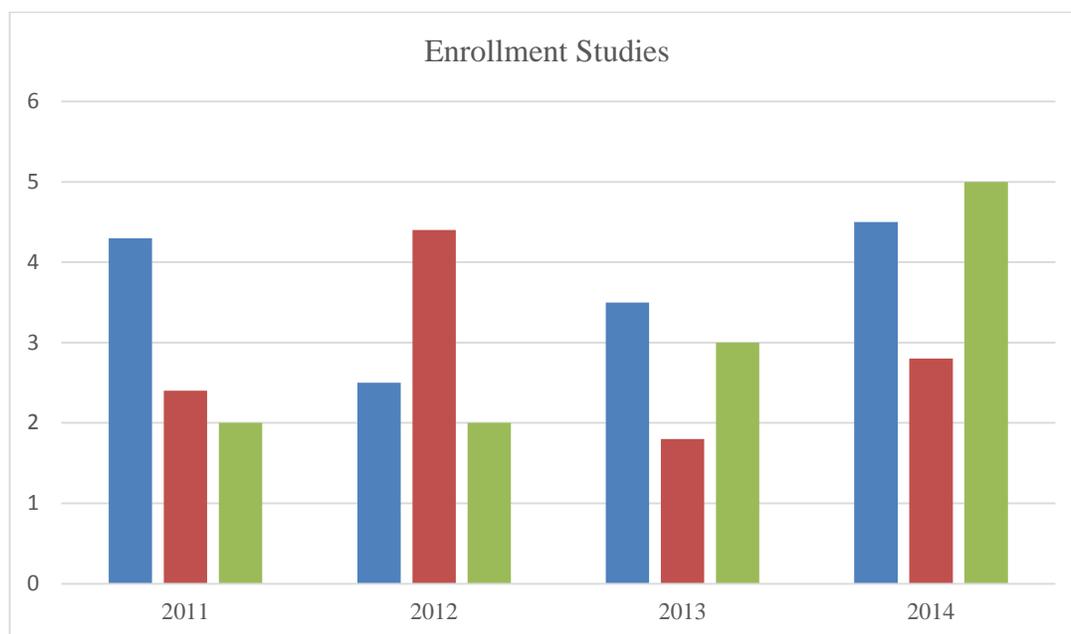
Example

Figure 1. Enrollment trends over a four-year period to forecast trends for future planning.

Note: Not all papers will have a List of Figures; consult the APA manual beginning on page 150 for more information regarding the use of figures.

Appendix M

Sample Chapter I Introduction

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The National Healthcare organization 9nEO) has been recognized all over the world as a pioneer in the delivery of high-quality rehabilitation and long-term care. The goal of the organization is to offer a complete range of extended health care services which have been designed in order to maximize the independence and well-being of patients of differ is committed to meeting the needs of patients via a multidisciplinary approach, putting into combination high-quality patient care, together with cost-effective services. As presented on the website, NHO (2009) offers services to more than 80 long-term health care facilities.

So as to be viewed as a high-quality facility, several standards when it comes to care should be measured accordingly. One of the standards points to the weight loss rate among different patients. NHO has eventually set a goal below 5% of the patients with significant weight loss in every center for every quarter, along with recent weight loss rate that is way above the so-called acceptable range. It is in the best interest of every employee to be able to reach that goal. The loss in weight may have an influence on several aspects involved in patient care including mobility, skin breakdown, and the overall amount of staff time needed for patient care. The mentioned complications may also have an impact on the facility reputation, scores and bonuses of the employee. Unnecessary weight loss or that without any intervention may also prove to be a ground for state violations, fines as well as potential expensive lawsuits from the families reporting neglect.

An Objective of the Research

Several interventions are currently being made available to the NHO staff in order to help in preventing weight loss. Still, with several medical record observations, several of these interventions seem to be highly ineffective. At the same time, there are also some interventions that are commonly used which have been debated within the medical community. By taking into account some published research in the past, and doing some in-house analysis, the data may contribute to having an enhanced policy. Identifying which interventions can prove to be highly effective can also save the staff some money and time from the administration of treatments which generally do not work, thus allowing the staff to be able to focus on intervention methods that are worthwhile.

Appendix N

Sample Chapter II Review of Literature

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The available literature on nutrition within long-term care centers is highly extensive in certain areas while locking in others. Some of these interventions that are addressed come with a multitude of available information in order to help in determining the effectiveness, while the others come with little past information. Most of the information that will be reviewed in this particular section is study articles from medical and health-related journals, including the American Dietitians Association Journal, and similar other publications. The articles which were reviewed focused on the interventions which look into the study, including the influence of diet orders, dining location, enhanced foods, use of health supplements, appetite stimulants, as well as predictors of aspects involving weight loss on admission.

The literature that has been reviewed has showcased that unnecessary weight loss in long-term care facilities is certainly a real problem which happens, not just in NHO, but also at different centers all over the country, as well as an international level. This has indicated that unnecessary weight loss is no doubt an issue which deserves further studies. As highlighted in a journal written by Philip Boule (2008), unnecessary weight loss is common among those who are elderly and may even happen in about 60% of those in nursing home facilities. It is very important to address this issue because as reported, this unnecessary weight loss may increase the risk of patients to experience infection, depression, anemia, incontinence, falls, immobility, bone fracture, skin breakdown, function loss, as well as death. The American Dietitian Association (2007), has also reported that patients residing in health care facilities usually have poor health conditions which

come as a result of dehydration and malnutrition and that professionals should be involved in

taking the lead to research and develop highly effective nutrition and food services in a specific

aging spectrum.

Appendix O
Sample Chapter III Methodology

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to potentially determine which interventions used in order to prevent unnecessary weight loss among NHO patients which were highly effective. The interventions that are currently set in place have become the standard of MHO for such a long time. The interventions which were addressed have been performed without reviews. This means that until now, in order to determine the real effectiveness within an NHO specific center. Looking into the nutrition interventions that are currently used is very important in order to ensure that NHO uses proven, effective methods within a fight against unnecessary weight loss.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The data tabulated resulted in some really surprising outcomes to the researcher. Consistency in the diet has yielded a very strong relationship which can influence the weights of the patients. Most of the patients who have experienced unnecessary weight loss have received an almost mechanical altered diet, with most of the patients receiving a regular consistency in diet. None of the evaluated interventions has resulted in a very strong relationship regarding the weights of the patients. While those mechanically altered diets show no difference. Recommendations include further studies which can reveal the reduced rates of unnecessary weight loss within facilities, thus helping in improving the nutritional condition of the patients. It is hoped that new recommendations will be provided by the staff regarding best practices.

Appendix P

Sample References

The References header is upper and lower case letters. Make sure that everything you cite in the text is also in the reference list and vice versa. The *APA Manual* describes the correct format for each type of reference. Be especially careful about how you reference and format online sources. **Each entry should be in a *hanging indent format*. This paragraph is typed using hanging indent format.** See examples of types of references below. **Avoid hyperlinks in blue. All online links should be displayed in black in the list of references when used.**

References

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Bormann, C. A., & Stone, M. H. (2001). The effects of eliminating alcohol in a college stadium: The Folsom Field beer ban [Electronic version]. *Journal of American College Health*, *50*(2), 81-88.

Crowl, T. K. (1993). Qualitative research methods. In P. Geller & S. Schmidt (Eds.). *Fundamentals of educational research* (pp. 432-456). Dubuque, IA: Brown and Benchmark.

Degelman, D., & Harris, M. L. (2000). APA style essentials. Retrieved August 27, 2001, from Vanguard University, Department of Psychology.

Szuchman, L. T. (2002). *Writing with Style: APA Style for Counseling*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Van Nuys, D. (Producer). (2007, December 19). *Shrink rap radio* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from http://www.shrinkrapradio.com/

Appendix Q

Sample Appointment of Capstone Project Advisory Committee

APPOINTMENT OF CAPSTONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Project Topic: _____

_____

_____

Student: _____

Committee Members:

Chair: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Outside Professional Expert (if any):

Member: _____

_____   _____

Date   Signature (Department Chair)

Appendix R

Sample Institutional Review Board Application

(Institutional Review Board Application)

IRB Number: _____
(IRB Use Only)

Institutional Review Board
1000 ASU Drive #210
Lanier Hall 114
Lorman, MS 39096-7500
Tel: 601-877-3964   Fax: 601-877-2327
E-mail: IRB@alcorn.edu

Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

Federal regulations and the Alcorn State University policy require that all research involving humans as subjects to be reviewed and approved by the ASU Institutional Review Board (IRB). Any faculty, staff, student, or other persons wishing to conduct research involving humans as subjects of research at or through ASU must receive written approval from the IRB before beginning the research.

All forms must be completed, signed by the RPI, and submitted by FAX, Email, or single-sided hard copy.

Research Training):   ☐ **Yes**   ☐ **No**   **If Yes, please attach a copy of verification.**

1. RESPONSIBLE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (RPI) The individual who has lead responsibility for conducting the research. The RPI may be a ASU employee or external individual. Whenever the responsible principal investigator is not a ASU faculty or staff member, the research must be supervised by a non-visiting ASU faculty or staff member, who will be designated as the Responsible Research Supervisor (RRS).

Last Name:	First Name:		Academic Degree(s):
Dept. or Unit:	Office Address:		Mail Stop:
Street Address:	City:	State:	Zip Code:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:	
ASU Status: ☐ Faculty ☐ Academic professional/Staff ☐ Student			

1A. Responsible Research Supervisor (RRS) A member of the ASU faculty or staff (i.e., an employee of ASU) who has supervisory responsibility for the protection of the subjects and the conduct of the human subjects research described in the research protocol submitted for review under the ASU policy and procedures for human research protection. ASU students and graduate assistants cannot serve as RRS.

Last Name:	First Name:	Academic Degree(s):
Dept. or Unit:	Office Address:	Mail Stop:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:
ASU Status: ☐ Faculty ☐ Academic professional/Staff ☐ Other _____		

1B. List all other ASU Co-Researchers

2. PROJECT TITLE

2A. Project Type: ☐ Master's project/thesis   ☐ Faculty research   ☐ Sponsored research

☐ Student research   ☐ Doctorate research/thesis   ☐ Other: please specify _____

2B. Joint Project   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Name of Lead Investigator/Organization:		
Name of Partner Institution/Organization:		
Partner Investigator Last Name:	First Name:	Academic Degree(s):
Dept. or Unit:	Office Address:	Mail Stop:
Street Address:	City:	State:	Zip Code:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:

3. FUNDING Indicate whether this research is funded by, or application has been made for, a grant, contract, or gift.

3A. STATUS   ☐ Research is **not funded** and is **not pending** a funding decision (Proceed to Part 4).

☐ Research is **funded** (funding decision has been made).

☐ Funding decision is **pending**. Funding proposal submission date:

3B. SOURCE(S) If the research is funded or pending a funding decision, mark and name all sources:

Type of Funding—Mark all that apply	Name of Source
☐ **ASU Department, College, or Campus** (includes research board and campus fellowship training grants)	
☐ **Federal** (from federal agencies, offices, departments, centers)	
☐ **Commercial Sponsorship** (from corporations, partnerships, proprietorships)	
☐ **State of Mississippi Department or Agency** (from any state office or entity)	
☐ **Gift or Foundation** (public or private foundations, not-for-profit corporations, private gifts)	
☐ **Local Government Agencies** (Cities, counties, municipalities)	
☐ **Mark if funding is passable through State sources**	
☐ **Mark if funding is passable through Federal sources**	

➤ Mark here if the funding is through a Training Grant: ☐

3C. PROPOSAL Attach a complete copy of the funding proposal or contract. ☐ Attached

Sponsor-assigned grant number, if known: _____

Title of funding proposal or contract, if different from project title in part 2:

4. SUMMARIZE THE RESEARCH. In <u>**LAY LANGUAGE**</u>, summarize the objectives and significance of the research.

> All boxes are expandable so please use as much detail as possible.

5. Data Collection (mark all that apply)

☐ From existing data, documents, or records that are **publicly available**.

☐ From existing data, documents, or records that are **confidential**. Access to the documents or records is restricted and can occur by permission only.

☐ From existing biological, diagnostic, or pathological specimens that are **confidential**. Access to the specimens is restricted and can occur by permission only.

☐ By directly or indirectly **interacting with subjects individually or in groups**.

☐ From the **observation of public behavior**.

☐ Other (please explain) _____

5A. TYPE OF RESEARCH (mark all that apply)
(Data collected from schools, institutions, organizations, etc., research must have written approval, on letterhead, from those organizations.)

A. ☐ Research conducted in a school setting that focuses on the following normal educational practices:

    ☐ Instructional strategies, techniques, or curricula for regular education

    ☐ Instructional strategies, techniques, or curricula for special education

    ☐ Classroom management methods for regular education

    ☐ Classroom management methods for special education

B. ☐ Research that involves the use of educational tests (diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), surveys, interviews, and/or observation of public behavior.

C. ☐ Research that involves the collection or study of existing data, documents, pathological specimens, and/or diagnostic specimens.

D. ☐ Research that involves the collection of biological samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture.

E. ☐ Research that involves the collection of data by non-invasive means using one or more of the following procedures:

    ☐ voice, video, digital, or image recordings   ☐ weighing or testing sensory acuity

    ☐ moderate exercise   ☐ muscular strength testing

    ☐ physical sensors applied to the surface of the body or at a distance, and the procedure does not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject or an invasion of the subject's privacy

☐ flexibility testing   ☐ magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

☐ electrocardiography (ECG)   ☐ electroencephalography (EEG)

☐ finger nail or hair clipping   ☐ mouth or skin swab

F. ☐ Research that is conducted by or subject to the approval of a department or agency head and is designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine a public benefit or service program, its procedures for obtaining benefits of services, possible changes in or alternatives to the program or its procedures, or possible changes in methods or levels of payments for benefits or services provided.

G. ☐ Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies in which wholesale foods without additives are consumed, and the food consumed contains food ingredients at or below the level known to be safe and for a use known to be safe.

5B. ANTICIPATED NUMBERS How many subjects, including controls, will you study in order to get the data that you need?
If you plan to study disproportionate numbers of a given sex, race, or minority group, provide scientific rationale in 11. Please list and describe each performance cite separately.

Performance Site	Total
1.	
2.	
3.	
TOTALS	

List anticipated numbers for additional performance sites on an attachment and mark here: ☐

5C. AGE RANGE Mark all that apply. Researchers planning to include children in research projects involving *more than minimal risk* must provide written documentation of the benefits that are likely to accrue to a child participating in the project. This should include information gathered on adults, if it exists, or an explanation about why it does not exist.

☐ 0–7 years   ☐ 8–17 years   ☐ 18–64 years   ☐ 65+ years

→ ☐ If applicable, written documentation of benefits for including children in ***more than minimal risk*** research is attached.

5D. Research Will Focus on Specific Subject Groups
Eligibility for participation in this research <u>will be restricted</u> based on the following criteria:

☐ Gender or sex   ☐ Race/Ethnicity   ☐ Religion

☐ Socioeconomic status   ☐ Sexual orientation   ☐ Age

☐ English as a first language   ☐ Other (please describe) _____

5E. Adults (persons 18 years of age and older)

☐ ASU students   ☐ Adults in the community (not ASU students)

☐ Pregnant women   ☐ Adults in treatment   ☐ ASU faculty and staff

☐ Adults having legal representatives (guardians)

☐ Adults with limited civil freedom (prisoners, parolees, probationers)

☐ Adults with psychological, cognitive, neurological, or intellectual impairment

☐ Adults with a life-threatening illness

☐ Adults with known history of trauma or victimization

☐ Elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office

5F. Minors (children and adolescents under 18 years of age)

☐ ASU students   ☐ Non-ASU minors   ☐ Juvenile detainees

☐ Minors with known history of trauma or victimization

☐ Minors with known physical or psychological conditions

5G. Financial Interests: Indicate below if any investigators or any members of their immediate families have any relationships, commitments, or activities with the sponsor of this research that might present or appear to present a conflict of interest with regard to the outcome of the research. (If a financial conflict of interest exists, please submit the ASU approved conflict management plan. If you have questions about conflict of interest contact the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost at 217.206.6614.)

☐ Ownership, equity or stock options
Has been disclosed to the ASU campus   **OR**   ☐ has not been disclosed to the ASU campus

☐ Personal compensation such as royalties,
consulting fees etc. has been disclosed to
the ASU campus   **OR**   ☐ has not been disclosed to the ASU campus

☐ Intellectual property such as patents, trademarks,
copyright, licensing, etc. has been disclosed
to the ASU campus   **OR**   ☐ has not been disclosed to the ASU campus

☐ Other conflict of interest:
Has been disclosed to the ASU campus   **OR**   ☐ has not been disclosed to the ASU campus

☐ No conflicts exist

6. RECRUITMENT

6A-1 RECRUITING PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY describe the systematic procedures for finding and recruiting subjects or requesting pre-existing data or materials. 1) State whether any of the researchers are associated with the subjects (*e.g.,* subjects are students, employees, patients). 2) Name any specific agencies or institutions that will provide access to subjects or subject data. 3) Who will contact the prospective subjects? 4) Who gives approval if subjects are chosen from records? 5) Describe solicitation through the use of advertising (*e.g.,* posters, flyers, announcements, newspaper, radio, television, Internet), face-to-face interaction, direct mail or phone contact, classrooms, subject pools, health care registries, patient referrals, and institutional "gatekeepers," as applicable.

6 A-2 Attach final copies of recruiting materials including the final copy of printed advertisements and the final version of any audio/taped advertisements and mark here: Attached ☐   Not applicable ☐

6 A-3 Attach written approval from agency, organization, or facility giving permission to conduct research at their location. Approval must include reference to a full understanding of the nature of the research and degree of their participation.

☐ Attached   ☐ Not applicable   ☐ Institutional Research

6B. WITHHELD INFORMATION Do you propose to withhold information from subjects prior to or during their participation?

☐ Yes　　　　　　　　　☐ No

If yes, describe what will be withheld, justify the withholding (address risks, provide rationale), describe the debriefing plan, and attach a labeled copy of a written debriefing form, to be provided to subjects.　　　Debriefing attached

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                                │
│                                                                │
│                                                                │
│                                                                │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

7. RESEARCH PROCEDURES:

7A. Subjects will be asked to: (Mark all that apply)

☐ complete an online survey or questionnaire

☐ complete a paper survey or questionnaire

☐ complete a face-to-face interview　　☐ with　　☐ without　　audiotaping/videotaping

☐ complete a telephone interview

☐ perform research tasks such as viewing pictures or listening to a presentation

☐ provide biological samples (e.g., hair or nail clippings, saliva, etc.)

☐ other (please explain) _____

☐ does not apply -- data will be collected from existing records or documents only.

☐ does not apply -- data will be collected through behavioral observation only.

7B. Data will include: (Mark all that apply)

☐ private information about each subject (i.e., age; income; health status; psychological, educational, or physical test scores; grades; biological specimens; audio, video, or photographic records; etc.).

☐ the subject's personal opinions, beliefs, perceptions, views, values, experiences, and/or behaviors.

☐ the subject's professional opinions or expertise.

7C. The data collected will be: (Mark only one)

☐ coded for research purposes but the research data include codes or demographic identifiers that would permit **the researcher** to identify individuals either directly or indirectly, through links to individual subjects. In other words, the subject could be identified either directly or indirectly through demographic data or a master code list linking names and research code numbers.

☐ recorded in a way that does not allow the subject to be identified, either directly or indirectly by anyone (including the researcher), through coding, demographic information, or other identifiers linked to the subject cases.

7D. Data will be: (Mark only one)

☐ Anonymous. The researcher will not know who gave what answers. No identifying information will be collected. No links between subject names and research code numbers exist.

☐ Confidential. Research coding will allow the researcher to match subject identifiers with the data; however, the researcher will store the data securely and will not disclose any individually identifiable information collected.

☐ Confidential, unless the subject provides explicit written permission, on the consent form, indicating that his or her identifying information can be included in the research.

☐ Not confidential. Potential participants will be informed, on the consent form, that confidentiality will not be maintained.

7E. Using <u>LAYPERSON'S LANGUAGE,</u> specifically describe what the participants (treatment groups and controls) will do and where the research activities will take place. Give approximate dates and durations for specific activities, including the total number of treatments, visits, or meetings required and the total time commitment. (for schools-based research where class time is used, describe in detail the activities planned for nonparticipants and explain where (*e.g.,* in a classroom, in a private area) both participants and nonparticipants will be located during the research activities. Include a concise description of procedures, locations, time commitments, and alternate activities on the relevant consent and assent forms.)

☐ Attach final copies (survey, consents, protocols, power points, transcripts of oral presentations, etc.)

8. INFORMED CONSENT: University policy requires the execution of a comprehensive, written document that is signed by the subject (or the subject's authorized representative) as the principal method for obtaining consent from subjects. The language in the document must be understandable to the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative. (Attach informed consent and checklist)

Children must *assent* (or, voluntarily agree) to participation and a parent must separately consent on behalf of their child (*i.e.,* two different forms are generally required). Children under age 8 may assent either orally or passively, depending on their level of maturity. Children 8–17 years old should sign a written form unless the ASU IRB approves a different process.

8A. TYPE OF CONSENT Mark all that apply and attach one copy of each relevant form, letter, or script on university letterhead. Include translations, if consent will be obtained in a foreign language. Use headings, headers, or footers to uniquely identify each document and associate it with the subject group for which it will be used.

☐ **Informed consent (assent) with an online document.**

☐ **Written informed consent (assent) with a document <u>signed by</u>**

    ☐ adult subjects   ☐ parent(s) or legal guardian(s)   ☐ adolescents aged 8–17 years

☐ **Waiver or alteration of informed consent (attach request for waiver form.)**

    ☐ adult subjects   ☐ parent(s) or legal guardian(s)   ☐ adolescents aged 8–17 years

☐ **Waiver of documentation (signature) of informed consent (attach request for waiver form.)**

    ☐ adult subjects   ☐ parent(s) or legal guardian(s)   ☐ adolescents aged 8–17 years

8B. USE OF PROXY Will others (*e.g.,* next of kin, legal guardians, powers of attorney) act on behalf of adult subjects in giving consent to participate in this research? ☐ Yes   ☐ No   If yes, describe

8C. USE OF PROXY OUTSIDE Mississippi If a proxy is used in research conducted outside Mississippi and/or the United States, provide justification (e.g., statement of an attorney or copy of applicable law) that the proxy is authorized under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the research will be conducted to consent to the procedures involved in this protocol.

8D. CONSENT PROCESS Describe when and where voluntary consent will be obtained, how often, by whom, and from whom. If cognitively impaired subjects (including children under age 8) will be involved, explain how the subject's understanding will be assessed and how often; include the questions that will be asked or actions that will be taken to assess understanding.

Describe any waiting period between informing the prospective subject and obtaining the consent. Describe steps taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence. Indicate the language used by those obtaining consent. Indicate the language understood by the prospective subject or the legally authorized representative.

If the research involves pregnant women, fetuses, or neonates, indicate whether consent will be obtained from the pregnant woman, mother, father, or all. If the research involves children, indicate whether consent will be obtained from: Both parents and legal guardians unless one parent is deceased, unknown, incompetent, or not reasonably available, or when only one parent has legal responsibility for the care and custody of the child; or from one parent regardless of the status of the other parent.

9. RISKS

9A. DESCRIPTION Specifically describes all known risks to the subjects for the activities proposed and describes the steps that will be taken to minimize the risks. Include any risks to the subject's physical well-being, privacy, dignity, self-respect, psyche, emotions, reputation, employability, and criminal and legal status. Risks must be described on consent forms.

9B. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Determining risk related to research is not always an easy task. Risks can be physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, or unknown. The probability (likelihood) as well as the magnitude (i.e., severity, duration, and reversibility) of potential harm must be considered. When evaluating research risk, it is also important to focus on the immediate or reasonably foreseeable risks of the research, as separate from potential risks or benefits associated with the consequences of applying the knowledge that might be gained from the research. The potential benefits of a study do not alter the risk classification. The risk/benefit assessment only refers to the acceptability of the risk, not the level of the risk.

A commonly accepted definition of minimal risk is a level of risk no greater than that typically encountered in the daily lives of healthy individuals in the general population. Thus, the researcher should consider (a) the likelihood of potential harm; (b) the magnitude of potential harm; (c) whether the likelihood and magnitude of potential harm are greater than those encountered in the ordinary daily life of a healthy person; (d) what research procedures are in place to minimize the probability and/or magnitude of harm to subjects; and (e) the extent to which those research procedures are adequate to diminish the risk of harm. For example, a breach of confidentiality is a serious risk, but protections such as restricted access (locked files, stand-alone computers, password protections, and certificates of confidentiality) reduce the absolute risk significantly and may thereby make the overall risk to the subject minimal.

Please consider the immediate or reasonably foreseeable risks of the research rather than the risks associated with the long-term outcome or consequences of applying the knowledge gained from the research.

9C. RISK LEVEL: ☐ **No more than minimal risk**
(the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated for participation in the proposed research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests).

☐ **More than minimal risk**

9D. Data Monitoring Plan: Must describe the provisions for monitoring the data to ensure the safety of subjects (List who will periodically have access to the data, and monitor harms and benefits experienced by subjects? How often will monitoring occur? Where will the data be stored (locked cabinets, password protected files etc)? If appropriate, what criteria will be used to stop the research based on monitoring of the results?)

10. BENEFITS Describe the expected benefits of the research to the subjects.

11. BENEFITS Describe the expected benefits of the research to society.

If additional risk/benefit information is attached, mark here: ☐

12. INVESTIGATOR ASSURANCES: The signature of the responsible principle investigator is required (scanned or faxed signatures are acceptable). Other investigators are also responsible for these assurances and are encouraged to sign.

I certify that the information provided in this application, and in all attachments, is complete and correct.

I understand that I have ultimate responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, the conduct of this study, and the ethical performance of this project.

I agree to comply with all ASU policies and procedures, the terms of its Federal Wide Assurance, and all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research.

I certify that
- The project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the ASU IRB-approved protocol.
- The equipment, facilities, and procedures to be used in this research meet recognized standards for safety.
- No change will be made to the human subjects protocol or consent form(s) until proposed changes approved by the ASU IRB.
- Legally effective informed consent or assent will be obtained from human subjects as required.
- Unanticipated problems, adverse events, and new information that may affect the risk–benefit assessment for this research will be reported to the ASU IRB Office (601.877.3964) and to my Departmental Dean.

- Student and guest investigators on this project are knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing this research, including any confidentiality and safety requirements.
- I agree to meet with the investigator(s), if different from myself, on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
- If I will be unavailable, as when on sabbatical or other leave, including vacation, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence. I will advise the ASU IRB by letter of such arrangements.

I further certify that the proposed research has not yet been done, is not currently underway, and will not begin until IRB approval has been obtained.

Responsible Principal Investigator	Date	Investigator	Date

Investigator	Date	Investigator	Date

Responsible Research Supervisor	Date

(if RPI is a student, or otherwise applicable)

Appendix S

Sample Capstone Project Formatting Checklist

Capstone Formatting Checklist

Use the suggested checklist below to evaluate the formatting of your document before submission to the Graduate Office. If your document follows this prescribed checklist, you should experience a successful submission. Remember to submit your capstone project electronically in pdf format.

STUDENT'S NAME:

CAPSTONE TOPIC:

NUMBER OF TIMES REVIEWED: **1** ☐   **2** ☐   **3** ☐

Title, Submission Information
☐ Parts of the capstone organized in the correct order
☐ Titles on title page, signature page, and abstract are identical
☐ Title includes no more than 12 words
☐ Four original copies of approval/signature pages submitted for review with capstone document; White 25% cotton bond, 20 lbs.
☐ Signatures of capstone project committee signed with black ink
☐ Capstone proposal presented to committee members for review

Title Page
☐ No page number is displayed on this page
☐ No abbreviations used in title
☐ Matches sample in Appendix
☐ Title is typed in upper and lower case letters
☐ Title is centered vertically and horizontally on page

Table of Contents
☐ Table of Contents is centered on the page and formatted in bold
☐ Page numbers are preceded by ellipses (…) and are right justified
☐ Each entry must appear exactly as it is written in the text
☐ Each Appendix has a title in the Table of Contents

Page Numbering
☐ Roman numerals on preliminary pages
☐ Arabic numerals used in main body, begin on page 1 on first page of Chapter 1

Margins
☐ Right margin, top and bottom margins 1" except on cover, title page, and signature page (2" top margin)
☐ Left margin 1.5"

Fonts
☐ Style: Times New Roman
☐ Size: 12 - point type
☐ Same font and point type used throughout the text
☐ All primary text should be in black

Line Spacing
☐ Double spacing in body text
☐ One space after each period inserted that separates each part of the sentence

Abstract
☐ Brief and concise summary of the research study
☐ Length no more than 250 words or less (must not exceed more than 350 maximum)

Body of the Work
☐ Paragraphs are indented at the beginning of the sentence
☐ 12 - point font used for all text (Tables and Indices may contain 10 pt)
☐ Manuscript double-spaced
☐ Each Chapter, List, and Appendix begins on a new page
☐ First line of each paragraph is indented
☐ No blank pages
☐ No excess white space on pages

Citations (in-text)
☐ Every citation in text follows APA style
☐ Citations in body of manuscript match the references

References
☐ Starts on new page
☐ Header written in upper and lower case letters
☐ Only the references cited in the body of the thesis are included in References cited
☐ All references listed in alphabetical order from A to Z, with a hanging indent format
☐ Double space references, double-space between
☐ All web pages appear in black type- not blue

Tables and Figures
☐ Tables and figures are labeled and numbered correctly
☐ All charts, graphs, and other illustrations are legible
☐ Tables and figures appear on separate pages
☐ Captions are single spaced and placed directly <u>below</u> the figures and <u>above</u> the tables

Appendices
☐ Page numbers of appendices are sequenced and positioned as those used in the body

ASSURANCES

In submitting this capstone project, I verify I have utilized this checklist in concert with my capstone committee to submit a credible manuscript for review and approval by the Graduate Studies Administrator.

I further attest to the fact that my document does not contain any plagiarized content and have followed all the guidance in the capstone manual.

Student Date

Appendix T

APA Style and Writing Hints

APA STYLE HINTS

Please use the following resource, in addition to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed.

Source: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/

HELPFUL WRITING HINTS

Title

Centered on a line on the upper half of the page and broken up, if necessary, at a meaningful point.

Citations and general style guidelines

- Refer to authors by last name only and do not mention the titles of their works (except in the References section).
- If you have not read a source, do not list it in your References section. In the body of the paper refer to the source you did read (secondary source) and indicate that the primary source was cited in the secondary source.
- Do not use "the current study" or "the present study" to refer to someone else's work.
- Do not indicate what researchers thought, felt, believed or said. Use instead reported, have shown, and replicated.
- Avoid long quotations and frequent brief quotations.
- Do not refer to yourself as "we" and do not call the reader "you."
- Start every paragraph with a topic sentence and never write one-sentence paragraphs.
- Do not write "he" when you mean "he or she."
- Do not leave prefixes hanging loose from words.
- The plural of these singular words datum, criterion, phenomenon, stimulus, and hypothesis are data, criteria, phenomena, stimuli and hypotheses.
- Introduce abbreviations in parentheses and use the abbreviations rather than the full term thereafter.
- Use past tense to describe research findings – your own and those covered in your literature review.
- Racial and ethnic group labels are proper nouns. Capitalize them.

Wordiness and Redundancy

- Avoid using more words than you need (based on the fact that = because), and try not to say the same thing twice (could be perhaps because = could be because). Eliminate all unnecessary words. Some examples:
- The results revealed that…Omit the entire phrase and start your sentence with the word that would come next.
- The obtained data showed = The data showed.
- Participants for the study were = Participants were
- Due to the facts that = because
- The reason is because = The reason is
- A total of eight participants = Eight participants
- …has been previously found = has been found
- In his study, Smith reported = Smith reported
- Distinctly different. Choose one word or the other

Informal Language and Slang

- The tone of technical writing is not conversational or informal.
- Contractions are illegal. Use apostrophes only to indicate possession.
- Use while in its temporal sense only. If you can't substitute simultaneously, consider although or whereas.

Latin Abbreviations

- Et al. stands for et alia, which means "and other things." Et is not an abbreviation and does not require a period after it. Al. is an abbreviation, and does require a period.
- I.e. stands for id est, the Latin phrase meaning "that is." Both letters are legitimate abbreviations, and so they both take periods. Use this abbreviation within the parentheses. The English phrase "that is" goes outside the parentheses. In either case, follow with a comma.
- E.g. stands for exempli gratia, the Latin phrase meaning "for example." Both letters are abbreviations and both require periods. Also, as above, if you use the phrase inside parentheses, use the Latin abbreviation, and outside the parentheses use the English equivalent. Either way, follow it with a comma.

Alphabetizing the Reference Section

Alphabetize according to the last name of the author who is listed first in each source. Keep the following in mind:

- Do not rearrange the order of authorship of any given article or chapter. If the article lists the authors as Smith, R. T., & Jones, A. L., do not list them as Jones followed by Smith.
- Works by the same author are listed by year of publication, with the earliest first.
- If you have the same author listed first with different coauthors for different articles, arrange them alphabetically within the listing for that author, according to the second author of each entry. List Smith, R. T., & Jones, A. L. before Smith, R. T., & Marks, B. J.

- If an author appears as a single author of one source and the first coauthor of another, list the single-author source first and then the one with the coauthor. List Smith, R. T. before Smith, R. T., & Jones, A. L.

Abbreviations

Acceptable abbreviations in the reference list for parts of books and other publications include

chap.   chapter

ed.   edition

Rev. ed.   revised edition

2nd ed.   second edition

Ed (Eds.)   Editor (Editors)

Trans.   Translator(s)

n..d..   no date

p. (pp.)   page (pages)

Vol.   Volume (as in Vol. 4)

vols.   volumes (as in 4 vols)

No.   Number

Pt.   Part

Tech. Rep.   Technical Report

Suppl.   Supplement

Appendix U
Sample Program Evaluation Research Plan
Source: PSL Capella University

Section 2. Topic Endorsement

2.1 Capstone Topic (2 paragraphs)
FIRST PARAGRAPH: Describe the specific topic to be studied. SECOND PARAGRAPH: Describe the significance of this topic to your program/field (MLA/MSN/DNP). Include a statement about the practical implications of your project. For example, what will be the impact of this project on your organization or your community of interest? The Topic should be correctly formed: ☐   The Topic should be appropriate for the specialization. ☐   The Topic should use appropriate language for key concepts/phenomena. ☐   The type of action proposed should be clearly specified. ☐   The community of interest/organization and target population should be named. ☐   The concepts should be appropriately focused. **Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. Textbooks are not primary resources. Theses and dissertations are not considered peer-reviewed published articles.** Use APA style in citing all resources.

2.2 Research Problem (1 Paragraph)
Write a brief statement that fully describes the problem being addressed. Existing literature and key findings should be summarized to support the project. The problem to be addressed should be explicitly stated, not implied. Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. Use APA style in citing all resources.

Section 3. Rationale for Study

3.1 Synthesis and Review of the Literature
Conduct review of the literature; synthesize the literature on the topic; summarize how the current literature supports the proposed topic and how your study can add to the literature. This synthesis should describe the themes found in the literature which are supported by clusters of evidence. In 3-5 paragraphs, provide a synthesis of these themes

in the literature.

3.2 Need for the Project and Evidence to Make Change

Provide current information on your needs assessment or analysis to justify the need for the program evaluation. Include the cost-benefit analysis if indicated by your program evaluation design. Include descriptive statistics on the program you will evaluate (number of people served, etc.).

3.3 Theoretical Foundation

Describe the theoretical framework or conceptual model to be used in your program evaluation study. Insert a copy of the logic model or graphical representation of your research design. Restate the research design and methodology. This design should reflect the project mission, aims, and goals.

3.4 Researcher Positionality

- Insider w/collaboration (work or volunteer with the organization)
- Outsider, collaboration w/ insiders (no affiliation, but working with stakeholders within the organization)

Define your role, position, and how positionality will impact your research study.

Section 4. Method

4.1 Summary of methodology

Briefly describe the project research design, describe the setting, what data needs to collected, how data will be collected, and the analysis to be used.

4.1a Quantitative Measures and Instruments

List and describe each variable and the data collection instrument or measurement tool you will use to collect these data. This includes standardized questionnaires, demographic data and surveys, etc. List and describe each data collection instrument or measurement tool you will use. See Appendix A for an example of a completed chart.

If using a secondary data source, describe the nature of it, confirm that you have permission to use it, and who granted that permission.

Attach a copy of each instrument you plan to use as an appendix to your capstone research form.

Variable Type	Variable Name	Survey/Questions/ Calculations	Variable Level of Measurement	Instrument Name	Reliability Estimates

Insert more rows as needed

4.1b Qualitative Constructs and Interview Guide

List and describe each qualitative construct and the data collection method you will use to collect these data. Include alignment of data collection source with the concept. See Appendix B for an example of a completed chart.

Attach a copy of the interview guide you plan to use

as an appendix to your Research Plan.

Data Source	Specific Data Source	Constructs of Interest	Specific Interview Question

Insert more rows as needed

4.2 Pilot & Field Tests

Describe any pilot test or field test that may be required. Field tests must be done for qualitative interview questions developed by the learner.

   a. A field test with experts requires no IRB review.
   b. Standardized instruments are strongly recommended. Designing your own quantitative instrument is NOT recommended and requires a pilot test to establish reliability and validity. A pilot test requires IRB review and approval.

4.3 Research Questions

List the research questions. The questions should align with the activities and intended outcomes of the project. The study aims and research question(s) should clearly reflect the theoretical framework or conceptual model.

4.4 Data Analysis

List each research question or sub-question. Then detail the actual data analyses to be conducted to address that specific question.

Describe analysis procedures for each data source including: audiotapes, transcripts, videotape, field notes, photos, descriptive analysis, other quantitative analysis.

Describe all methods and procedures for data analysis including:

a. Organization of raw data (transcription, calculation of scaled variables, reliability)
b. Management/processing/preparation of data
c. Method of qualitative analysis and description of any statistical analyses
d. Storage and protection of data

4.5 Sample Size

For each data source, describe the sample size, and provide references to support sample size decisions.

4.6 Assumptions

Identify the key (A) theoretical, (B) topical, and (C) methodological assumptions of the project.

4.7 Limitations

Evaluate the weaknesses of your project at this time. Indicate areas to be improved before starting your project and areas that cannot be improved. Give reasons for not redesigning to address any of the limitations identified.

Section 5 Sample and Design/Approach

5.1 Sampling and Recruitment

For each data source, describe the sampling plan. Briefly describe the data source, the sampling plan, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and any recruitment strategies (where applicable). Using the example below, complete the table with your own sample information.

Describe how you plan to select the sample. Include the steps you will take to include participants.

5.2 Expected Site

Describe the organization or site(s) from which you expect to draw your sample.

5.3 Site Permission

Who is authorized to provide permission to use this organization or site? Does the site have an IRB? What do you need to do to obtain permission to access the stakeholders, population, or data source?

5.4 Participant Contact

How will potential participants first be contacted? How will participants be contacted following the study?

5.5 Evaluation Plan and Time Frame

Describe the steps and time it will take to complete the project. Provide a quarter-by-quarter listing of activities from start to finish. Describe the exact procedures that will be needed to carry out this study. This is a step-by-step description of exactly how the research will be conducted. This should read like a recipe for conducting your study. Be sure to include all the necessary details so that someone else should be able to follow this to replicate your study. (See Appendix C for an example of a completed chart.)

Quarter	Activity	Estimated time frame

Insert more rows as needed

5.6 Dissemination Plan

Describe your plan for dissemination of your project findings. Include the specific activities and dissemination tools key messages, and how you may change your research plans based on the stakeholder feedback loop. Include your plan for timing.

Example potential target audiences:
- Service providers/organizations
- Board members
- Policy makers
- Consumers/Consumer organizations

- Higher education
- Stakeholders

Example dissemination:
- Focus group presentation and discussion
- Community meeting
- Executive summary mailed to stakeholders

5.7 Goal of the Program Evaluation

Describe the overarching goal of the program evaluation. Was it requested by an agency, the community? What is the desired outcome? What do you intend to do with the findings?

Section 6. Ethics

6.1 Ethical Considerations

Describe any ethical considerations given the sample and/or topic. Please explain as fully as possible. How do you plan to protect human participants while identifying the sample, while collecting the data, or while analyzing the data?

Describe any ethical concerns about defined researcher positionality and how they will be addressed. Address any potential for coercion and how this will be avoided.

6.2 Risk Assessment

Is your study more than minimal risk? Does the study collect data from a vulnerable population? What special steps will you take to protect your participants? Refer to your CITI course for more information about minimal risk. Please explain.

Section 7. References

List all references used in proper APA Style. You should include a minimum of 30 for your research plan, but will need at least 50 for your final capstone project.